

CHICAGO, IL - Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (D-IL) announced his decision to make his first co-sponsored bill in Congress the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 (LLEHCPA).

"We've come a long way in the last 20 years when it comes to equality," said Quigley. "But we've still got a lot of work to live up to the idea that all Americans are created equal."

The LLEHCPA will authorize the Department of Justice to investigate and prosecute certain bias-motivated crimes based on the victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability. In 2007, the FBI reported over 7,600 hate crime incidences, including almost 1,500 targeted against the LGBT community. Currently, the federal government can only investigate hate crimes motivated by the victim's race, color, religion, and national origin.

"We cannot and should not allow anyone to use race, gender, or sexual orientation to divide us and distract us from our shared responsibility to ensure that justice is for every man, woman, and child," said Quigley.

In addition to authorizing the DOJ to investigate and prosecute crimes based sexual orientation, the bill will also provide local authorities with more resources to combat hate crimes and give the federal government jurisdiction over prosecuting hate crimes in states where the current law is inadequate.

Throughout his career, Quigley has championed issues particularly important to the LGBT community. As Cook County Commissioner, Quigley worked tirelessly, in conjunction with a coalition of LGBT advocates, to ensure that Cook County does not do business with groups that discriminate based on sexual orientation. Additionally, Quigley passed a groundbreaking ordinance that created the Cook Country Domestic Partnership Registry, which allows domestic partners to more easily secure benefits for one another.

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